

5th Edition Cantrips Modification – Version 20141005a
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In my opinion, such as it is, the cantrips in 5th edition are too powerful to be listed as cantrip/orison, and violate the original intent of cantrips when first introduced in the AD&D 1st Edition Unearthed Arcana, “Cantrips are the magic spells learned and used by apprentice magic-users and illusionists during their long, rigorous, and tedious training for the craft of magic-use.” “Most cantrips are simple little spells of no great effect...” “All cantrips are 0 level, have a 1” range, have a generally small area of effect, require only soft, simple verbal and somatic components, and are cast in a very short time (1/10 to ½ segment). Only those which involve living creatures afford any saving throw.” “The effects of cantrips, and the people and items affected by them, radiate a very faint magical aura.” “Note that despite their simple components and short casting times, only two cantrips can be cast during any round by a single magic-user or apprentice.” - Unearthed Arcana, p 45, 1985.

5th Edition tried changing the definition of cantrips to “simple by powerful spells that characters can cast almost by rote” 5th Edition D&D Player's Handbook p. 201, 2014. This of course didn't just start with 5th edition, but it was taken even further than previous editions and inflate their effects even more.

Instead, I have taken the list from 5th edition, (this same exercise could also be applied to previous editions effectively too) removed all the spells that are “too powerful” to be cantrips and have the moved to 1st level, retaining as cantrips those that qualify to only “have 1” range, small area of effect”. If the cantrip was previously a 1st level spell, that is an automatic change back to first level spell instead of cantrip. Additionally, I have brought back into the list those cantrips from the old UA, and that were the seeds for some great clever uses in ROLE-playing situations, including my personal favorite, firefinger.

Criteria for deciding if a cantrip should be a 1st level spell instead:

- * If the cantrip was previously a 1st (or other) level spell, then it is automatically switched back to 1st level.
- * If the cantrip has information that increases its effectiveness when the spell caster is a higher level, then that also should become a spell instead.
- * If the cantrip has more than a 1” range it should be considered as a possible candidate to become a first level spell instead.
- * If the spell can stop or cause more than 1 hp of damage (any kind, including but not limited to non-lethal, psychic, lethal, etc.), then it should not be a cantrip.

Alternate rule: If the larger variety of cantrips you feel is not sufficient, as some people argue that having such powerful cantrips in 3rd through 5th edition help keep spell casters in the battle longer, whereas in the “old days” they would cast, especially at low level, 1 or 2 or 3 spells, and then be spent. That could be considered by some to be a valid point, but they have overcompensated with the cantrips beginning in 3rd edition and increasingly inflated with 5th edition. To compensate for moving all the powerful cantrips (back) to first level, though 5th edition has already added additional first level spell slots for some classes, DM's may opt to allow 1 or 2 (or more, DM's discretion) additional spell casting slots at first level (only), to help them have a better start.

Cantrips Lists

With notes whether to keep as cantrip or move to 1st level instead:

If no mark in front, then it is a cantrip as per the 5th edition rules.

→ An → (arrow) indicates this cantrip should be treated as a 1st level spell (many/most of them were first level spells in previous versions of D&D), rather than as a cantrip.

± If there is a ± (plus/minus) sign, this is a cantrip from other sources (such as AD&D 1st Edition Unearthed Arcana) and can be optionally added (or not) depending on DM preferences.

² A numerical super script indicates a footnote number indicates some note for that spell that is recommended to be different than the default as listed in the 5th Edition Player's Handbook.

? A ? (question mark) indicates I am not fully decided on this spell, for not treat as cantrip, but might be modified in the future pending play testing and feedback from others.

¹ Source is Unearthed Arcana.

³ Source is D&D 3.5 Player's Handbook.

^{3b} Source is D&D 3.5 Spell Compendium

Alphabetical Cantrips List (5th Edition Only)

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| → Acid Splash | → Poison Spray |
| → Blade Ward | → Produce Flame |
| → Chill Touch | Prestidigitation |
| → Dancing Lights | → Ray of Frost |
| ? Druidcraft | ? Resistance |
| → Eldritch Blast | → Sacred Flame |
| → Fire Bolt | → Shocking Grasp |
| → Friends | Spare the Dying |
| ? Guidance | → Shillelagh |
| → Light | ? Thaumaturgy |
| Mage Hand | ? True Strike |
| → Mending | → Vicious Mockery |
| ? Message | |
| → Minor Illusion | |

Alphabetical Cantrips List (Complete)

(5th Edition plus Unearth Arcana 1st Edition and others)

→ Acid Splash	± ³ Ghost Sound	± ¹ Shine
± ^{3b} Amanuensis	± ¹ Giggle	→ Shocking Grasp
± ¹ Bee	± ¹ Gnats	± ¹ Smokepuff
± ¹ Belch	± ¹ Groan	± ¹ Sneeze
→ Blade Wrđ	? Guidance	± ¹ Sour
± ¹ Blink	± ¹ Hairy	Spare the Dying
± ¹ Bluelight	± ¹ Haze	± ¹ Spice
± ¹ Bug	± ¹ Hide	± ¹ Spider
± ¹ Change	± ¹ Knot	± ¹ Spill
± ¹ Chill	± ³ Know Direction	± ¹ Sprout
→ Chill Touch	→ Light	→ Shillelagh
± ¹ Clean	Mage Hand	± ^{3b} Silent Portal
± ¹ Color	± ¹ Mask	± ^{3b} Sonic Snap
± ¹ Colored Lights	→ Mending	± ^{3b} Stick
± ¹ Cough	? Message	± ¹ Stitch
± ¹ Creak	± ^{3b} Minor Disguise	± ¹ Sweeten
± ¹ Curdle	→ Minor Illusion	± ¹ Tangle
± ¹ Dampen	± ¹ Mirage	± ¹ Tap
→ Dancing Lights	± ¹ Moan	± ¹ Tarnish
± ^{3b} Dawn	± ¹ Mouse	? Thaumaturgy
± ¹ Dim	± ¹ Mute	± ¹ Thump
± ¹ Dirty	± ¹ Nod	± ¹ Tie
± ¹ Distract	± ¹ Noise	? True Strike
? Druidcraft	± ¹ Palm	± ¹ Tweak
± ¹ Dry	→ Poison Spray	± ¹ Twitch
± ¹ Dust	± ¹ Polish	± ¹ Two-D'lusion
± ¹ Dusty	→ Produce Flame	± ¹ Unlock
→ Eldritch Blast	± ¹ Present	± ¹ Untie
± ¹ Exterminate	Prestidigitation	→ Vicious Mockery
→ Fire Bolt	± ¹ Rainbow	± ¹ Warm
± ¹ Firefinger	± ¹ Ravel	± ¹ Whistle
± ¹ Flavor	± ¹ Rattle	± ¹ Wilt
± ¹ Footfall	→ Ray of Frost	± ¹ Wink
→ Friends	? Resistance	± ¹ Wrap
± ¹ Freshen	→ Sacred Flame	± ¹ Yawn
± ¹ Gather	± ¹ Salt	
± ^{3b} Ghost Harp	± ¹ Scratch	

Cantrips List by Spell Caster Type (5th Edition Only)

Bard Cantrips

- Blade Ward
- Dancing Lights
- Friends
- Light

Mage Hand

- Mending
- ? Message
- Minor Illusion

Prestidigitation

- ? True Strike
- Vicious Mockery

Cleric Cantrips

- ? Guidance
- Light
- Mending
- ? Resistance
- Sacred Flame
- Spare the Dying
- ? Thaumaturgy

Druid Cantrips

- ? Druidcraft
- ? Guidance
- Mending

- Poison Spray
- Produce Flame
- ? Resistance
- Shillelagh
- Thorn Whip

Sorcerer Cantrips

- Acid Splash
- Blade Ward
- Chill Touch
- Dancing Lights
- Fire Bolt
- Friends
- Light

Mage Hand

- Mending
- ? Message
- Minor Illusion
- Poison Spray
- Prestidigitation
- Ray of Frost
- Shocking Grasp
- ? True Strike

Warlock Cantrips

- Blade Ward

- Chill Touch
- Eldritch Blast
- Friends

Mage Hand

- Minor Illusion
- Poison Spray
- Prestidigitation
- True Strike

Wizard Cantrips

- Acid Splash
- Blade Ward
- Chill Touch
- Dancing Lights
- Fire Bolt
- Friends
- Light

Mage Hand

- Mending
- ? Message
- Minor Illusion
- Poison Spray
- Prestidigitation
- Ray of Frost
- Shocking Grasp
- True Strike